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TAGS: PFOR PINT KS US
SUBJ: MEDIA HANDLING OF PAK TONG-SON CASE, ET AL, 12 28
1. ALL AFTERNOON VERNACULAR PAPERS DECEMBER 28 CARRY MAJOR HEADLINES AND EXTENSIVE FRONT-PAGE STORIES CONTAINING DETAILS OF "PENDING PROBLEMS" BETWEEN ROK AND U.S. WHICH PRIOR COVERAGE HAD ONLY HINTED. THREE ISSUES ARE: ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING ACTIVITIES OF PAK TON-SON, STATUS OF KIM SANG-GUN, AND ALLEGED BLUE HOUSE BUGGING. ALL NEWSPAPERS RAN FULL TEXT OF STATEMENT OF FOREIGN MINISTER ON FRONT PAGE, NEXT TO OWN STORIES AND PHOTO OF PAK TONG-SON. INSIDE, PAPERS RAN ALMOST VERBATIM TEXTOF MUCI "REFERNCE MATERIALS" PREPARED FOR FIRST MEETING OF NEW PEACEFUL UNIFICATION COUNCIL (PUC) OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (NA) AND ALSO RELEASED
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TO NEWSPAPERS DECEMBER 28.
2 FRONT-PAGE STORIES EXPLAINED THAT PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, COLTURE AND INFORMATION. AND NATIONAL UNIFICATION BOARD HAD APPEARED BEFORE PUC. MAIN STORIES MOSTLY REHASHED FOREIGN MINISTER'S PRESS RELEASE. ADDITIONAL STORIES GAVE CONTENTS OF RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY PUC, GENERALLY SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS SO FAR. INSIDE STORIES ACCOMPANYING "REFERENCE MATERIAL" (WHICH WAS UNATTRIBUTED AND RUN AS GENERAL BACKGROUND) GAVE CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT OF ALL THREE ISSUES.
3. PAPERS ALSO REPORTED ON FRONT PAGE COMMENTS OF A FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE THAT (A) USG INVESTIGATION INTO PAK TONG-SON CASE WILL CONTINUE, AS WILL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN ROK AND U.S.; (B) HIGH LEVELS OF U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE SEVERAL TIMES DENIED, IN BOTH SEOUL AND WASHINGTON, THE (ALLEGED) BLUE HOUSE BUGGING OPERATION; AND (C) THERE HAS BEEN NO EXCHANGE OF EITHER MEMORANDA OR RECORDS OF AGREEMENT REGARDING THE PROBLEMS PENDING

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BETWEEN ROK AND U.S. SAME SOURCE ALSO EXPLAINED THAT STORIES HAD NOT BEEN CARRIED IN KOREAN PRESS UNTIL NOW: (A) LEST DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH U.S. BE AFFECTED, (B) BECAUSE GROUNDLESS FOREIGN REPORTS MIGHT STIMULATE NATIONAL SENTIMENT (U.S. NOT MENTIONED), AND (C) BECAUSE WE SHOULD NOT GIVE NORTH KOREA A CHANCE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS AFFAIR.

4. AS YET, THERE HAVE BEEN NO EDITORIALS ON THIS SUBJECT. SNEIDER UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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